

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 OMB-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10

LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 EURE-00 OPR-02 NIC-01

DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 RSR-01 /113 W

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P R 201358 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6336

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

UEHMO/ AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1215

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

USMISSION NATO

UNCLAS HELSINKI 1665

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: ELAB, ETRN, FI

SUBJECT: END IN SIGHT FOR FINLAND' S SPRING LABOR CONFLICTS.

REF: (A) HELSINKI 1571; (B) HELSINKI 1396 NOTAL

BEGIN SUMMARY. LONGSHOREMEN STRIKE IS EXPECTED TO END
JUNE 27 CLOSING ONE OF FINLAND' S MOST FRACTIOUS ANNUAL
BARGAINING ROUNDS IN MANY YEARS. END SUMMARY.

1. A PROPOSED SETTLEMENT WAS REACHED IN THE FINNISH
LONGSHOREMEN' S STRIKE (REFTEL A) ON JUNE 19. UNION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAS RECOMMENDED THAT MEMBERSHIP
APPROVE CONTRACT IN REFERENDUM TO BE HELD JUNE 25 AND 26.
ALTHOUGH MEMBERSHIP REJECTED TWO PREVIOUS CONTRACT PRO-
POSALS IN APRIL AND MAY BEFORE RESORTING TO STRIKE,
APPROVAL THIS TIME IS NEARLY CERTAIN. COMMUNIST MINORITY
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STILL FORMALLY OPPOSES SETTLEMENT BUT IS EXPECTED TO ACCEPT RESULTS OF VOTING. THUS FINNISH HARBORS SHOULD RE-OPEN FOR ALL MERCHANT SHIPPING JUNE 27 SETTLEMENT PROVIDES MARGINAL GAINS OVER PREVIOUS PROPOSALS IN TERMS OF WAGE INCREASES; EXTENDS " GUARANTEED WORK" TO SMALLER HARBORS NEXT YEAR; AND REFERS WORKING HOURS QUESTIONS

(INCLUDING SATURDAY " FREE- DAY") TO SPECIAL COMMITTEE.

2. MONTH- LONG CONSTRUCTION STRIKE ENDED WHEN WORKERS APPROVED NEW CONTRACTS LAST WEEKEND AND WORK RESUMED ON JUNE 28. VOTE IN FAVOR OF SETTLEMENT, DESPITE TACIT DISAPPROVAL OF UNION' S COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP, WAS OVER 70 PERCENT.

3. LONGSHOREMEN' S RETURN TO WORK WOULD END ONE OF THE MOST FRACTIOUS ANNUAL BARGAINING ROUNDS IN MANY YEARS.

THIS YEAR' S CONFLICTS, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN MORE REMARKABLE FOR THEIR VARIETY THAN FOR THE ACTUAL NUMBER OF MAN- WORK- DAYS LOST. ONLY THE CONSTRUCTION CONFLICT INVOLVES SUBSTANTIAL NUMBERS OF WORKERS. SMALL GROUPS IN KEY SECTORS -- RADIO/ TV, TELECOMMUNICATIONS, OIL PRODUCT TRANSPORT, ELECTRIC POWER, AIRLINES, ETC -- WERE ABLE TO CREATE WIDE INCONVENIENCE AND COMMAND BROAD PUBLIC ATTENTION. A MAJOR CONTRIBUTING FACTOR WAS THE FAILURE THIS YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TEN YEARS, TO REACH A CENTRAL GUIDELINE AGREEMENT (SEE REFTEL B).

4. THE PERPETUAL TREADMILL OF NEGOTIATIONS YEAR AFTER YEAR HAS BEGUN TO WEAR ON THE NEGOTIATORS. CALLS FOR TWO OR THREE YEAR CONTRACTS ARE BEING INCREASINGLY HEARD FROM ALL SIDES OF THE LABOR MARKET AND CHANCES ARE IMPROVING THAT NEXT YEAR' S SETTLEMENT MAY SEE A BREAK WITH FINLAND' S LONG TRADITION OF ANNUAL BARGAINING. MOUNTING INFLATION WILL COMPLICATE THE EFFORT, HOWEVER, AND TOGETHER WITH THE CONTINUING SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC/ COMMUNIST RIVALRY IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT MAY EVEN BRING NEW LABOR TROUBLES IN THE FALL.
KREHBIEL

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